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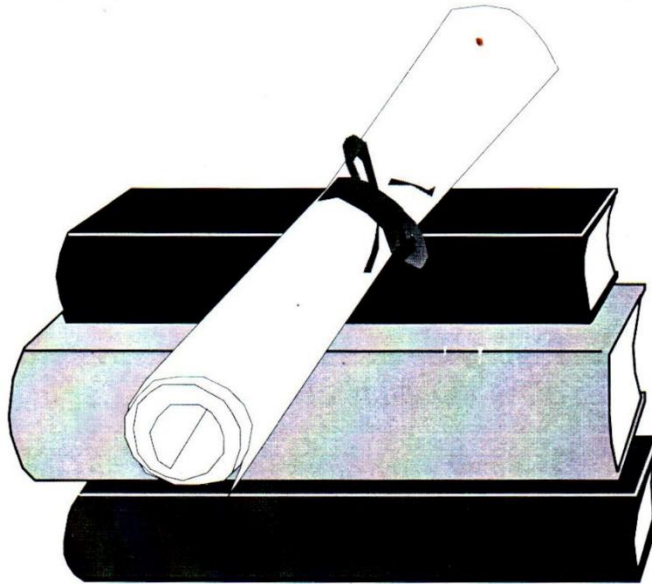
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## Legal Implications of MDGs in Library Sustainability in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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### Abstract

*This paper looks at those factors that would enhance role of the library in bringing about the attainment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium development goal in Nigeria as well as the legal implications of the non-achievement of Universal primary education and the probable consequences for the Nigerian society, the conclusion and recommendations are suggested to address the challenges identified.*

There are laws governing every society, in other words every society has laws which regulate its affairs. Dada (2006) theorised that law essentially consists of a body of rules. These set of rules are usually designed to regulate human conduct and the setting for its operation is the society. Law once made is meant to be obeyed and goes on with the art of enforcement and above all, there is usually a reproach or on for any act of violation or defiance. According to Sanni (2006), the totality of law of any society can be said to always aim at serving the broad purposes which •cluck.-

### i) **Definition and Regulation of Social Relationships**

Law plays an important role in the definition and regulation of different kinds of social relationships in the society between individuals and between groups.

### ii) **University Community**

The Law defines and regulates the relationship between the institution and its organs and its academic, non-academic, the students body and members of the public at large. Now one wonders what the term society means.

Heasman (1976), defined society to mean large sections of people who have some characteristics and in a restricted sense to mean the social contacts found in a

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group. What is undeniable is that a society must be constituted by a group or what the sociologist calls a human group. The international Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences (2004) defines it to be "a relatively independent or self sufficient territory of cultural distinctiveness and sexual recruitment". It is a self sufficient system of action which is capable of existing longer than the lifespan of an individual, the group being recruited at Least in part by the sexual reproduction of its members.

From the foregoing it is obvious that law regulates all the affairs of the society of which education is a vital part because education has been seen as an essential key for the literacy advancement of its citizenry therefore this paper will attempt to examine the second millennium development goal, assess the legal effect with a view to making suggestions towards the role of the library in achieving universal primary education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### Library and the Law in Education

Education is defined by Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia (2011) to be an act or process of developing or cultivating(whether physically, mentally or morally) one's mental activities or senses: the expansion, strengthening and discipline of one's mind, faculty etc; the forming and regulation of principles and character in order to prepare and to make fit for any calling and business or systematic instruction. Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> century dictionary (2002) defines education as a process of teaching, training and learning especially in schools or colleges, to improve knowledge and develop skills.

It focuses on the cultivation of skills, trades or progressions as well as mental, moral and aesthetic development. Etim (2009) summed it up by adding that education is the driving force for citizens' participation in community development and this goes to show that the fundamental assumption of education is that the enterprise of civil society depends on educating people to become responsible, thoughtful and enterprising citizens through ethical principles, moral values among others.

The importance of education to human beings cannot be over emphasised. It is a human right that should be accorded to all human beings solely by reason of being human. There are a lot of human rights instruments that provide for education as a fundamental human right of which Nigeria is a signatory to. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), The International Covenant in Economics, Social and Cultural right(1966)and the African Charter on Human and Peoples rights (1981) and to underscore the importance which the federal government of Nigeria attaches to education, it adopted education as an instrument for national development thus the legislature has enacted appropriate laws that would oversee its application and they include: Section 18 of the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria (promulgation) decree of 1999,cap11 restates the objectives of education in Nigeria also as contained in the 1979 constitution and in the fourth edition of the National Policy on Education (FRN2004) which stated the following as the objectives of Nigerian education. These are the:

- i) The inculcation of national consciousness and unity
- ii) the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;

- iii) the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around;
- iv) the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of his society

From an understanding of the above, there is a central theme which links them all together and this is the concept of knowledge which therefore leads us to the place of the library. The term library has been variously defined but this paper will confine itself to define the library as a place where information resources in both print and non print formats are kept and provisions made for access and retrieval of information.

Though there is no express mention of the term "library" in the National Policy on Education (,2004) however the section on Educational Services in National Policy on Education (2004) covers the library. The National Library Act (1964) was passed by the federal parliament in September 1964 to give legal backing to the establishment of a national library in Nigeria, this in effect means that Nigeria has a national library established by law. In principle there is no doubt that the federal government attaches importance to the library as there is provision for library in the various sections at all levels of education as follows:-

**i) On Adult and Non- Formal Education;**

The federal ministry of education should be responsible for support services for adult and non- formal education within the state including curriculum development, libraries and audio-visual materials (National Policy on Education 2004). Laudable as the foregoing provision is, the government realised that there must be implementation guidelines to turn the objectives into action thus the following suggestions were made for inclusion in the teacher education programme by the implementation committee on National Policy on Education which included:-

- All primary and secondary schools and teacher training colleges should be planned with libraries/media resource centres. The personnel to staff these centres should be teacher/librarians and media specialists trained at teacher training colleges.
- In recognition of the contribution which libraries and audio-visual aids could make to the education process, all teacher training programmes for all levels should include courses on the use of books (libraries) and media resources.
- Professional specialist programmes for teacher /librarians and media specialists should be provided at all teacher training colleges as is done for physical education.

As a result of the importance government attached to libraries, one of the 14 measures outlined in the National Policy on Education (2004) is that libraries are one of the most important education services and that every state ministry needs to

to train librarians and library assistants for this service, which would to a large extent help in the attainment of the MDGS.

### **The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

In 2000, one hundred and eighty-nine nations made a promise to free people from extreme poverty and multiple deprivations. This pledge became the eight millennium development goals to be achieved by 2015. In September 2010, the world recommitted itself to accelerate progress towards these goals and they are:

- i) To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- ii) To achieve universal primary education
- iii) To promote gender equality and empower women
- iv) To reduce child mortality
- v) To improve maternal health vi) To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- vii) To ensure environmental sustainability viii) To develop a global partnership for development(UNDP2010)

These are the eight millennium development goals as stated by (UNDP2010) however the intention of this paper is to evaluate the possible achievement of the second goal which is to achieve universal primary education by 2015 in Nigeria.

### **The Concept of Universal Primary Education**

In September 1976, the federal government of Nigeria launched the universal primary education(UPE)scheme, Now Universal Basic Education. However, this scheme was abandoned midway due to lack of funds necessitated by corruption (Obayan 2000). In November 1999, the administration of former president, Olusegun Obasanjo launched the universal basic education for the nation. It is an expansion of the former universal primary education scheme. The UBE programme was launched for the purpose of achieving compulsory, free and universal basic education. It was Nigeria's response to the achievement of education for all. (Ejere 2011).

The UBE is aimed at enabling all children in the Nigerian society to participate in the free 9 years of schooling from primary one to junior secondary school(JSS) three classes. It is intended to be universal and compulsory. According to Obayan (2000),these terms imply that appropriate types of opportunities will be provided for the basic education of every Nigerian child of school going age. It is worthy to note that Nigeria is one of the 164 countries that signed the Dakar framework of action to ensure education for all (EFA) by year 2015.The main thrust of the UBE programme is to lay the foundation for lifelong learning through the inculcation of appropriate learning, self awareness citizenship and life skills. Specifically the objectives of the programme include :-

- i) Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- ii) The provision of free compulsory universal basic education for every child of school age group
- iii) Reducing drastically the incidence of drop-out from the formal school system

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- iv) Catering for the learning needs of young persons who for one reason or the other have had to interrupt their schooling through appropriate forms of complimentary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- v) Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, manipulative and life skills as well as the ethical, moral and civil values needed for laying the foundation for lifelong learning.(Nigeria 2009)

The training of children and adolescents in the norms and aspirations of the nation is a veritable instrument for national development, According to Ayeni (2000), it was expected that educational reforms or re-organization would be carried out to enable Nigeria's education cater for the future professional needs. The UBE scheme is desirable as it would enable the federal government ensure that children are taught the culture of society and the desire to inculcate in children the knowledge of literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate (Aluede 2006).The UBE scheme is also designed to a solid foundation for scientific and reflective thinking, character and moral training and the development of sound attitude and above all develop in the child the ability to adapt to his changing environment especially with the information revolution experienced in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Ways of Achieving the Second Goal through Library Sustainability**

For the second millennium development goal to be attained in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the library has a role to play. Opara (2006) in agreement states that at this stage of Nigeria's development and within the context of a globalized world, the public library ought to be seen to be ready to provide ready and free access to books and other information sources for all members of the community. UNESCO (2000) confirmed this by adding that the public library is the local gateway to knowledge and provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. What is expected now is to offer suggestions on ways and means of achieving the second millennium goal through the instrumentality of the library. An articulated planning is the basis for an effective library services policy. It is in this regard that the following suggestions are offered to enable the federal, state and local government strengthen the current policies as they affect library service in Nigeria.

- (1) A philosophical orientation must be provided for library services in Nigeria. Such an orientation will address issues of funding and resources for library services in the context of the socio-economic and political experiences in Nigeria. The philosophical orientation will provide principles and practices for accepting that education is a system of which library is an integral part.
- (2) There is a need to devote a full separate section to library services in the National policy on Education in order for the library to have its pride of place in education.
- (3) Schools and public libraries should be equipped with good books, journals magazines and other pieces of literature, such libraries should be managed by

- professional librarians.
- (4) Primary and secondary schools should allocate some periods for library activities to enable the students learn how to use the library.
- (5) Innovations in library services; a conscious effort must be made to transform the traditional mode of service delivery in the library to the modern electronic version.
- (6) Information and Communication Technology  
Information and Communication technology simply means communicating information through the medium of technology. The advent of ICT has permeated every fabric of the society namely banking, law, business, medicine amongst others. The introduction and application of ICT in the library has today become an acceptable norm being the most realistic way and means of providing timely, accurate and efficient information services and the utilization of ICT in the library will serve to build public awareness on the capabilities of ICT.
- (7) Ailing libraries should be revived in all the local governments of Nigeria and should be made fully functional with books, computers, internet facilities and others.
- (8) Functional information resource centres should be established in village councils, town halls, churches, mosques etc as this would enable the child/youth in the remote area, without basic education to have access to information as Okon and Nkanu put it that with technology, we can have access to information anywhere and at anytime.
- (9) Networking between co-operating libraries  
Mohammed (2003) advocated that advances in ICTs and ICT application especially in digitized network and networking from the threshold of the 21st century have made information access, retrieval and dissemination much easier and available irrespective of the location, time, package and user, and Aina added that availability of full internet access in any Nigerian library will facilitate online access to the world of information once the network is in place, co-operating libraries/information resource centres will have access to the catalogues of participating libraries through the online public access catalogues.
- (10) Every space such as schools, libraries and community centres should be used as primary location for accessing and teaching computer skills, for both adults and children and local content for all media and the creation of awareness about ICTs should be developed to enhance understanding of the use and potential of digital technologies (Mutula and Mutula 2007).

### **Legal Implications of Non-Achievement of UPE**

It is a known fact that( at least in the developed world) that education determines not only earning capacity but also the very quality of human life, in a society that appreciates the educated class, those with good education tend to earn higher incomes, they



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also are in a better position to live a better and healthy life and this translates to a positive impact on the society as opposed to majority of the citizens in a society being uneducated where this is the case, there are specific legal implications which include:-

#### **i) Upsurge of Criminals in the Society**

Where children do not receive the basic education they require to become responsible citizens, they will resort to crime and exhibit other deviant behaviours.

#### **ii) Poor Quality of Graduates**

It is a generally accepted fact nowadays that the kinds of graduates churned out by higher institutions are not prepared with the necessary skills to face the challenges and rigours of the workplace.

#### **iii) Dearth of Skilled Manpower to Manage the Affairs of the Nigerian Society**

Where the foundation is faulty, the building will eventually collapse. When children of school going age do not receive the formal primary education, they grow up to become vision-less leaders.

Some of the other vices to be seen include:-

- iv) Prostitution:** When children do not go to school, especially the girl child who is already disadvantaged by reason of her gender, she could become a woman of easy virtue.
- v) Increased level of HIV/AIDS**
- vi) Disillusioned youths**
- vii) Ignorance**
- viii) Poverty**
- ix) Thuggery and proliferation of secret cult groups**
- x) Breakdown of law and order**

### **Conclusion**

The foregoing discussion has attempted to show the unrelenting efforts of successive governments to highlight the importance of Library to educational development through the millennium development goals as adopted in Nigeria. From all indications, the provision of the library in the various sections of the National Policy on Education (2004) are indications of acceptance of the library as a potent instrument for improvement of teaching and learning processes in Nigeria. It has also been established that the library is an important human development tool and also a powerful instrument for the social, economic and political transformation of the society especially if such a society is desirous of making great advancements in the science and technology era of the present 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, it is hereby recommended that-

1. The state ministry of education should ensure that all primary and secondary schools are equipped with libraries that have computers with internet facilities.

2. Professional librarians should be employed to administer these libraries and information resource centres.
3. It is important that some periods be allocated for the students to learn how to make effective use of the library as this would prepare them for effective use of the academic library at the tertiary level.
4. Every village council, town hall, church, mosque and other places of social gathering should have information resource centres so that a child/youth who lacks basic primary education can have access to unlimited knowledge from even the remotest part of Nigeria.
5. It is very vital that children wherever they are found be taught basic computer skills as this would help them in information retrieval.

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